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UNCLAS ZAGREB 01729

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E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: H5 SUBTYPE AVIAN FLU VIRUS FOUND IN CROATIA

REF: ZAGREB 1436

¶1. On Friday, October 21, the GOC confirmed that the H5 subtype of the avian influenza (AI) virus had been found in samples taken from dead swans in Slavonia, in eastern Croatia. The samples were forwarded to the European Union reference laboratory in the UK to determine if the swans were carrying the H5N1 variety and results are expected on Wednesday, October 26. The GOC immediately implemented protective measures including culling poultry and increasing surveillance in surrounding areas.

¶2. On Monday, October 24, Ambassador met with counterparts in the diplomatic community to discuss AI and the GOC's response. The Dutch are providing the Ministry of Agriculture with technical veterinary expertise and hope to bring two of their teams from Romania to Croatia to assist with surveillance and data collection. Post is in close contact with GOC officials and the international community and has formed an internal working group to coordinate efforts and share information. Details of the GOC's preparedness and current efforts will follow in septel.

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